



April 23rd, 2025

House Bill 5836– “Our History, Our Schools, Our Future: About Ethnic Studies Bill”

Dear Chair McNamara and Honorable Members of the Committee,

My name is Rathana and I am a Youth Leader at ARISE. I am writing to support House Bill No. 5836 because I'm scared that I would be forced to alternate between my different identities from being American and Khmer. I'm tired of people being ignorant about me and who I am as a Khmer individual, and it's terrifying that future generations aren't going to know their own identity as a Khmer individual and being American.

The reason why I'm here to support this bill specifically is to ensure my family and community is able to learn about their background and live their life knowing that we had a significant history. Ethnic studies would empower our community and our identities, and teach us that we have power as biracial or multiracial individuals. It shows that we won't stand defenseless against people who take advantage of us being different and fight against oppression, as well as going in depth into our racial history.

This influence also expands to other communities, not just a specific community, but to other people. In our day to day life, my community as a whole is able to learn about other people from different parts of the country, is able to learn our own rights as individuals, and to fight for our own rights. I urge you to support this bill because we want to learn true history not only from a Eurocentric lens.

Thank you,

Rathana
11th grade